

**Question on notice no. 84**

**Portfolio question number: AE18/087**

**2017-18 Additional estimates**

**Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, Home Affairs Portfolio**

**Senator Nick McKim:** asked the Department of Home Affairs on 26 February 2018

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1. Could you outline what eligibility criteria applicants for citizenship are currently assessed against?
2. Mr Pezzullo stated at last Estimates that well in advance of 1 July, he would seek policy authority from the Government as to how to proceed if the legislation is still potentially before the Senate. (page 174 Hansard) Does that mean that people applying for citizenship before 1 July this year could be assessed against criteria that is contained in any potential amendment bill?

**Answer —**

1. The *Australian Citizenship Act (2007)* sets out the legal requirements for Australian citizenship. People applying for citizenship by conferral (under general eligibility), are currently required to:

- be 18 years or older at the time of application; and
- be a permanent resident at time of application and decision; and
- meet the residence requirement; and
- understand the nature of the application; and
- possess a basic knowledge of the English language; and
- have an adequate knowledge of Australia and of the responsibilities and privileges of Australian citizenship; and
- be likely to reside, or continue to reside, in Australia or to maintain a close and continuing association with Australia if their application were to be approved; and
- be of good character at the time of decision on the application.

They must also satisfy identity and national security requirements. If the application is approved, they must make the Pledge of Commitment to become an Australian citizen.

2. Subject to the passage of the *Australian Citizenship Legislation Amendment (Strengthening the Requirements for Australian Citizenship and Other Measures) Bill 2017*, the Government's intention is for the reforms to apply to applications made on or after 1 July 2018.